

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 IO-10 ISO-00 OPIC-03 SAM-01 CIAE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

SCCT-01 /089 W

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R 051207Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1945

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1210

ROME FOR ILLING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PO

SUBJ: DISPUTE AT RADIO RENASCENCA

REF: LISBON 942 (NOTAL)

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SUMMARY: STRIKE OF EMPLOYEES AT CATHOLIC RADIO STATION CONTINUING INTO SECOND WEEK. STRIKERS BEING GIVEN EXTENSIVE, HIGH-PROFILE SUPPORT BY PRESS AND MEDIA. FAR LEFT POLITICAL GROUPS ALSO VOCAL IN SUPPORT. COMMUNISTS (PCP) CONSPICUOUSLY SILENT ON OFFICIAL LEVEL, ALTHOUGH COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED LABOR GROUPS AMONG THOSE BACKING STRIKERS. CHURCH HIERARCHY IS ADAMANT. CATHOLIC LAY REACTION MAY DEVELOP INTO FACTOR IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

1. DISPUTE AT RADIO RENASCENCA, CATHOLIC RADIO STATION UNDER JURISDICTIONAL CONTROL OF CARDINAL PATRIARCH OF LISBON, HAS GOTTEN WORSE. STRIKE THREATENED FRO FEB. 19 (REFTEL) MATERIALIZED WHEN NEITHER SIDE BACKED DOWN. INTRANSIGENCE CONTINUES CHARACTERIZE ATTITUDES ON BOTH SIDES.

2. WHILE BASIC ISSUE IS QUESTION OF WHO SHALL CONTROL STATION'S PROGRAMMING POLICY, IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF DISPUTE IS FIRING OF 11 EMPLOYEES BY STATION'S MANAGEMENT COUNCIL. COUNCIL CONTENTS IT HAD LEGAL AUTHORITY TO DISMISS THESE EMPLOYEES SINCE THEY WERE IN PROBATIONARY PERIOD. EMPLOYEES WHO CALLED STRIKE DEMAND COUNCIL RESCIND FIRINGS. STRIKERS ARE EMPHASIZING EMPLOYMENT ASPECT OF DISPUTE AND REPEAT CONTINUOUSLY THEY ARE NOT TRYING TO ATTACK CHURCH. ON OTHER HAND, CHURCH HIERARCHY HAS MADE CLEAR IT CONSIDERS IDOLOGICAL DIRECTION OF STATION AT STAKE.

3. LISBON'S LEFTIST-DOMINATED PRESS AND NATIONAL MEDIA HAVE GIVEN HIGHLY SYMPATHETIC PLAY TO STORIES COVERING STRIKER'S POINT OF VIEW, WHILE HIERARCHY'S POSITION IS PRESENTED SPARINGLY.

4. AMONG LEFTIST POLITICAL GROUPS BACKING STRIKE ARE MANUEL SERRA'S FRENTE SOCIALISTA POPULAR (FSP), LEFT SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (MES), MAOIST MRPP, REVOLUTIONARY ACTION GROUPS LUAR AND PRP-BR, AND A SMALL NUMBER OF LOCAL UNITS OF SOCIALIST PARTY (PS). PS ITSELF HAS NOT COMMENTED ON STRIKE, NOR HAS PCP. NON-INVOLVEMENT OF PCP IN FOMENTING ORIGINAL STRIKE AND CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT IT OPEN TO QUESTION, HOWEVER, AS UNIONS KNOWN TO BE DOMINATED BY PCP ARE AMONG STRIKERS' STRONGEST PUBLIC BACKERS. CATHOLIC LAY GROUPS, BOTH ORGANIZED AND SPONTANEOUS, ARE ALSO PLAYING PROMINENT ROLE.

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5. NUNCIATURA OFFICIAL, MSGR, MARIAN OLES, MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON SITUATION: ALTHOUGH HE IS HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS OF ROLE BEING PLAYED BY PCP, HE FEELS THAT LEFTIST INTEREST IN STRIKE IS NOT SOLE FACTOR INVOLVED. ROOM EXISTS FOR LEGITIMATE CRITICISM OF PAST POLICIES BY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL, AND SOME OF CRITICISM BEING DIRECTED AT HIERARCHY IS IN GOOD FAITH AND CONSCIENCE. NEVERTHELESS, HIERARCHY AT THIS POINT IS DETERMINED NOT TO YIELD. WHILE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE TECHNICALLY IS NOT INVOLVED (STATION

IS RESPONSIBILITY OF CARDINAL PATRIARCH ALONE), IT HAS CHOSEN TO SPEAK OUT ANYWAY. CONFERENCE HAS ALSO DECIDED FORCE ISSUE OF WHO WILL CONTROL STATION BY PREVENTING BROADCAST OF DAILY MASS AND ROSARY, WHICH STRIKERS EARLIER PROCLAIMED THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO BROADCAST IN DEMONSTRATION OF THEIR GOOD FAITH. ON LOWER LEVEL, ZEALOUS PARISH PRIETS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SPEEDY GATHERING OF 900 SIGNATURES TO SUPPORT HIERARCHY.

6. COMMENT: IF NEITHER HIERARCHY NOR STRIKERS YIELD, ONLY CHANCE FOR SOLUTION MUST COME FROM GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION. GOVERNMENT IS NOT INTERESTED IN CONFRONTING HIERARCHY AND IS LIKELY TO SEEK COMPROMISE SOLUTION. SHOULD SOLUTION NOT BE FORTHCOMING, STRIKE COULD AFFECT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. NOISY ATTACKS ON "CHURCH" FROM FAR LEFT COULD SWING CATHOLIC VOTERS TO THOSE PARTIES PERCEIVED (ESPCIALY AT VILLAGE LEVEL) TO BE DEFENDING CHRISTIAN INTERESTS IN HOUR OF DANGER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CATHOLICS, RADIO STATIONS, LABOR STRIKES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LISBON01210
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750077-0353
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750381/aaaacuvvc.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LISBON 942
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <16 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DISPUTE AT RADIO RENASCENCA
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006